

Approved For Release 2001/08/01 : CIA-RDP85T00073R02000700050

CIA/ONE/STAFF MEM/85-63(REV) RECENT POLITICAL TRENDS IN GHANA
SECRET DEC 63 01 OF 01

CIA/ONE / STAFF MEM / 85-63 (REV)

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

19 December 1963

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 85-63 (Revised)

SUBJECT: Recent Political Trends in Ghana

CONCLUSION

Even though Nkrumah's recent arms agreement with the USSR, and other anti-Western gestures, do not necessarily push him into the Communist camp, he has moved several long steps further in that direction. Indeed, we believe that he has concluded that his goals in Africa can be achieved only through closer association with the Bloc. He will almost certainly work more closely than ever with the Communists, whose short-term aims largely parallel his own militant line. Stepped-up Soviet backing for Nkrumah's ambitions to play the leading role in the "liberation" of southern Africa would increase Communist influence in Ghana and in the liberation movements elsewhere. At best, it will be increasingly difficult for the West to maintain an effective presence in Ghana.

* * * *

1. Recent reports [REDACTED]

25X1C

25X1C

[REDACTED] strongly suggest that Nkrumah has accepted a Soviet offer

25X1B

to provide extensive military aid [REDACTED]

and that he is negotiating for 402 military training slots in the

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file

S E C R E T

Bloc. Although Ghana previously sent some 70 cadets to the USSR for training, Nkrumah has heretofore relied almost exclusively on Commonwealth sources for arms. This shift in policy has taken place amidst other anti-Western and anti-US expressions in official quarters, and amidst disturbing rumors of additional moves adverse to the West. The main question concerning Nkrumah's intentions is whether he is merely engaged in one more of a series of manifestations, of a type familiar in the past, to demonstrate his displeasure with the West; or, whether he has decided to move toward a closer and more lasting association with the USSR. At the moment, Nkrumah is plainly frustrated and is in an emotional and potentially dangerous mood.

2. Probably the major immediate cause of Nkrumah's frustration is the stalling of his drive for Pan-African leadership. His disappointing showing at the Addis Ababa Conference in May has been followed by serious new setbacks. Slighted by denial of a seat on the key African Liberation Committee (ALC), Nkrumah's efforts to outflank the ALC by a "new" African High Command were stymied by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Defense Commission. Also, his latest scheme to obtain a major voice in the UN military operation in the Congo failed. Finally, his frenetic

- 2 -

S E C R E T

efforts to play a prominent role in the Morocco-Algeria border dispute proved even more embarrassing as lesser African lights stole the show and Ghana failed even to receive a place on the OAU Mediation Commission.

3. Nkrumah is still the unchallenged leader in Ghana, but even there his regime has encountered criticism and difficult problems are close at hand. Dwindling foreign exchange reserves (down from £ 208 million in 1955 to £ 54 million by 1 October 1963) and repeated, large budget deficits (approximately £ 43 million in 1963) threaten his showcase development program. Until Nkrumah summarily called a halt, the October debates on the proposed 1964 budget provided the astonishing spectacle of outspoken criticism of the regime by Government party (GPP) members of the normally docile Parliament. The legislators claimed that excise taxes and price rises for such necessities as kerosene, food, and clothing would cause severe hardships for the poorer classes. Despite new taxes and austerity measures to maintain the forced-march development expenditures, a deficit of at least £ 24 million is envisaged in 1964. In the event, it will probably be considerably more since tax revenues are unlikely to reach planned goals.

- 3 -

S E C R E T

Abroad, the breakdown in negotiations for an international cocoa (Ghana's principal export) agreement exposes the country to new economic pressures.

4. These reverses, particularly those on the African stage, have vexed Nkrumah beyond measure; moreover, they have acted as a goad for urgent new action. In any case, he was unlikely to accept political trouncings for very long, before attempting to reassert himself in Africa in some spectacular fashion. The dimensions of his pique are revealed in his recent speech to the Pan-African Union of Journalists (PAUJ), said by the US Ambassador to be perhaps Nkrumah's most extreme anticapitalist and revolutionary performance. In one scathing passage Nkrumah described the current situation in the Congo:

"The Belgian exploiters return in droves, secure in the knowledge that Mobutu's Army is the only source of governmental power and that he will protect them if the people's fury erupts. American and Belgian capitalists have now resolved their differences in the Congo, whose wealth they mean to exploit as joint partners once a military dictatorship has broken completely the Lumumbaist political forces and the resistance of the industrial workers. The writing on the wall for the Congo is as plain as it was in Peru, as it was in the Dominican Republic and in Honduras -- as it was in South Viet Nam before the military junta took over in order to give the war against the people of Viet Nam a new lease of life. The plight of the Congo is no secret in Africa. It is

- 4 -

S E C R E T

known in the fullest detail in every part of the World. What will happen if we allow the Congo Republic to go the way of a Latin American Republic? And what happens there is a symbol of what can happen in Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea, Mali, or Tanganyika and any other African state."

5. Emotion and degree apart, these sentiments are entirely consistent with Nkrumah's past political orientation. Pre-disposed toward Marxism by a long history of events dating from his student days, Nkrumah has increasingly come to believe that the West is implacably hostile to the goal that means most to him: leadership of a united Africa. As one after another of his ambitious Pan-African ventures have failed, Nkrumah has almost invariably pinned the blame on the West and its alleged intrigues against him. Indeed, he cannot overcome the suspicion that the West (particularly the US) is seeking to topple him.

6. Moreover, recent events have fed the fires of Nkrumah's distrust of the US. Clearly his interpretation of developments in Viet Nam, Cambodia, and the Congo is unfavorable to the US. Also, he probably believes that the US was chiefly responsible for the collapse of the cocoa negotiations, especially important to Ghana at this juncture. Finally, the death of President Kennedy -- with whom Nkrumah felt a sense of personal relationship -- removed an important element of restraint.

- 5 -

S E C R E T

7. Meanwhile, over the years, Osagyefo's sense of kinship with the Communist world has continued to grow, and he sees the Bloc countries as his firm allies in the fight against "neo-colonialism". Especially since 1960, he has increasingly regarded himself as the foremost African in a socialist fraternity now in power only in Communist countries, including Cuba and Yugoslavia. In retrospect, Nkrumah has permitted the growth of a disquieting amount of Communist influence in a remarkably short time. So much so that two senior officials of the Ghana Government have privately concluded that Nkrumah is a Communist of the Tito stripe. Moreover, the arms deal aside, strongly pro-Communist advisors such as Geoffrey Bing are in the ascendancy. Heretofore predominant in informational media they are increasingly employed to establish policy lines in labor and education. Elsewhere, USSR security agents are conducting classes for Nkrumah's personal staff at Flagstaff House and Nkrumah has forced Ghana's intelligence chiefs to send trainees to Moscow. In still another gesture, Nkrumah placed a fanatical pro-Communist in office as Secretary General of the PAUJ in Accra. On the other hand, he has continued to express his dissatisfaction with the Bloc aid program.

- 6 -

S E C R E T

8. It is plausible to reason that Nkrumah may have decided that his brand of "neutralism", although moderately successful, had failed to yield sufficiently rapid and impressive results. He may have further reasoned that new, more radical, initiatives e.g., the building of a prestigious military force, were required to re-establish himself as the preeminent political leader in Black Africa. We believe that these considerations, together with his long-standing predilection for Marxism, have led him to the conclusion that his goals could be achieved only through closer association with the Bloc. Drawing on his experience, he undoubtedly discounts the political risks, assuming that he can continue to use the Bloc and its support for his own purposes.

Implications of a Move to the Left

25X6 9. We cannot foretell what Nkrumah's next move may be, or precisely how far he might swerve to the left in his present irascible mood. [REDACTED] there is at least some chance that he might find himself more deeply enmeshed in Communist clutches than he had thought possible. However, even though Nkrumah may take additional steps damaging to Western interests, we continue to think he will stop in time to retain

- 7 -

S E C R E T

essentially his independence. His ambition to become Africa's acknowledged political spokesman has met stiff competition from other African political figures, and Nkrumah is aware that his credentials as an African leader would be tarnished even more should he give the appearance of coming substantially under Moscow's control.

10. Disturbing as it may be, the Ghana-USSR arms agreement does not signify that Ghana has suddenly become a Bloc satellite. Nkrumah seeks arms for several reasons. He hopes to command more respect on the African scene. He probably is thinking in terms of achieving a capability to provide the OAU or even the UN with a military force which would enable him to take advantage of potential opportunities a la Congo as they arise. Even more importantly, Nkrumah hopes to play a more direct and decisive role in the struggle to free white-dominated states in southern Africa. Apart from financial and arms support, Nkrumah probably hopes to make Accra the center for influence, inspiration, and encouragement of "freedom fighters" who will be beholden to him once they have achieved power. Since Osagyefo probably believes that he can obtain diplomatic and material support from the Bloc for these

- 8 -

S E C R E T

endeavors, increasingly closer relations with the Bloc for the duration of the liberation struggle seem almost certain.

11. More speculatively, there is at least a fair chance that Osagyefo's leftward evolution may bring Ghana into a position where it will serve Communist interests in Africa somewhat as Cuba does in Latin America. Like Castro, Nkrumah is already serving as an instrument for the extension of Communist influence to the extent that he increasingly accepts Bloc collaboration in the promotion of his cause. In this sense, Nkrumah's acceptance of Bloc aims is probably less significant than his acceptance of Bloc support and pervasive Bloc influence in those potentially important pan-African mass organizations responsive to Accra. Close collaboration has begun in the media field, but is probably more advanced in labor affairs. The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) is intimately involved in Nkrumah's promotion of an Africa-wide labor organization; more recently this approach has been supplemented by a strong WFTU-backed Ghanaian push to establish a series of African trade secretariats. Given Nkrumah's appeal to youth and other radical elements, this could have serious implications elsewhere in Africa, despite the fact that his heavy-handed tactics have in large measure isolated him from many established African leaders.

- 9 -

S E C R E T

12. Over the longer term, the close relationship with the Bloc in key fields, the training of substantial numbers of Ghanaians there, and the dissemination of Communist doctrine with official sanction, appear to be creating the basis for an eventually serious Communist movement in Ghana.

13. We believe the West is in for a dreary time in the months ahead, and that its position in Ghana will deteriorate markedly. Nevertheless, it is well to recall that there is something of a cyclical character to Nkrumah's virulent anti-West campaigns. We do not think that Nkrumah plans to eliminate US or Western influence in Ghana, e.g., the Volta Dam, since he continues to believe that he can obtain assistance on comparatively easy terms and without substantial concessions.

 25X1A